

ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to selective anxiolytic therapeutic agents which allow for the treatment of anxiety-related disorders with less severe side-effects, such as sedative and amnesic effects, and in particular, dependence liability. These selective agents
5 selectively or preferentially bind the $\alpha 2$ -GABA_A receptor, as compared to the $\alpha 1$ -GABA_A receptor. Alternatively, these selective agents selectively or preferentially activate the $\alpha 2$ -GABA_A receptor, as compared to the $\alpha 1$ -GABA_A receptor. The present invention also relates to methods for identifying such selective anxiolytic therapeutic agents. The present invention also relates to methods for identifying a molecule that decreases binding of a
10 benzodiazepine to the $\alpha 1$ -GABA_A receptor, but not substantially to the $\alpha 2$ -GABA_A receptor.

15

20

25

30

35